

## Riverwest property reborn as café, pasta business

A once tax-delinquent property in Milwaukee's Riverwest neighborhood has been renovated and re-opened as a market and pasta-making business.

**Mondo Brothers Market and Café** is located at 2730 N. Humboldt Boulevard in Milwaukee.

The building housed a wine and liquor distributor in the 1950's, but later became home to a canning factory and then a food packaging company. In 1998 the City of Milwaukee foreclosed on the property because of delinquent taxes. The city's brownfields team did an environmental assessment utilizing funding from a Site Assessment Grant provided by the Wisconsin DNR and removed a large underground fuel oil tank.

Milwaukee businessman Russ Davis acquired the Humboldt Boulevard property from the City in late 2003 for \$240,000, and invested additional monies into building cleanup and remodeling. Davis made the purchase to move and expand his Bella Luna pasta business, and to create the retail outlet and café. Davis is the owner of Café Vecchio Mondo, the Lakefront Brewery Palm Gardens restaurant and Riverwalk Boat Rentals and Tours.

"Russ Davis saw a diamond in the rough," said Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett. "He took a chance on an older manufacturing property. The city helped with testing and some of the cleanup, and chipped in with some financing. What he got was a solid building with existing infrastructure in a great neighborhood."

The Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) provided a \$222,000 low interest loan and helped secure other financing. DCD also provided a facade grant in the amount of \$10,000 to offset property improvement costs. The grant went toward new signage, window installation, a new awning, and landscaping.

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